



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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The Elders select first CEO

(Johannesburg, South Africa) Desmond Tutu, Chair of the Elders, today announced that Mabel van Oranje will serve as the group's first Chief Executive Officer. She will oversee the day-to-day operations for the Elders, a group of eminent individuals convened by Nelson Mandela to use their wisdom, independent leadership and experience to tackle some of the world's toughest problems.

"My fellow Elders and I are delighted to have found such an accomplished and dynamic individual to steer the operations of our group," said Tutu, "Mabel brings a strong background of work on some of the most challenging issues and a global perspective to this position, and I believe she will be instrumental in helping the Elders fulfill our mission."

Van Oranje, who assumes the position on July 1 and will be based in London, currently serves as the international advocacy director of the Open Society Institute, which is part of the Soros Foundations Network. She is also a founder and co-chair, together with Martti Ahtisaari and Joschka Fischer, of the European Council on Foreign Relations. Previously, she was the executive director of the Open Society Institute-Brussels (1997-2003), the representative office of the Soros Foundations Network in Western Europe. She founded and was the executive director from 1993 through 1997 of the European Action Council for Peace in the Balkans, a West-European non-governmental organization dedicated to establishing peace, democracy and stability in the Balkans. In 2005, the World Economic Forum elected Van Oranje a Young Global Leader. Jane Wales will continue to serve as acting CEO, until June 30th, 2008.

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